The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

7

Story & Art by
Aya Shouoto

CHAPTER
24
HAS AOI GROWN UP?
WHO IS THAT BEHIND YOU?

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CHAPTER 24

Kagome Kagome

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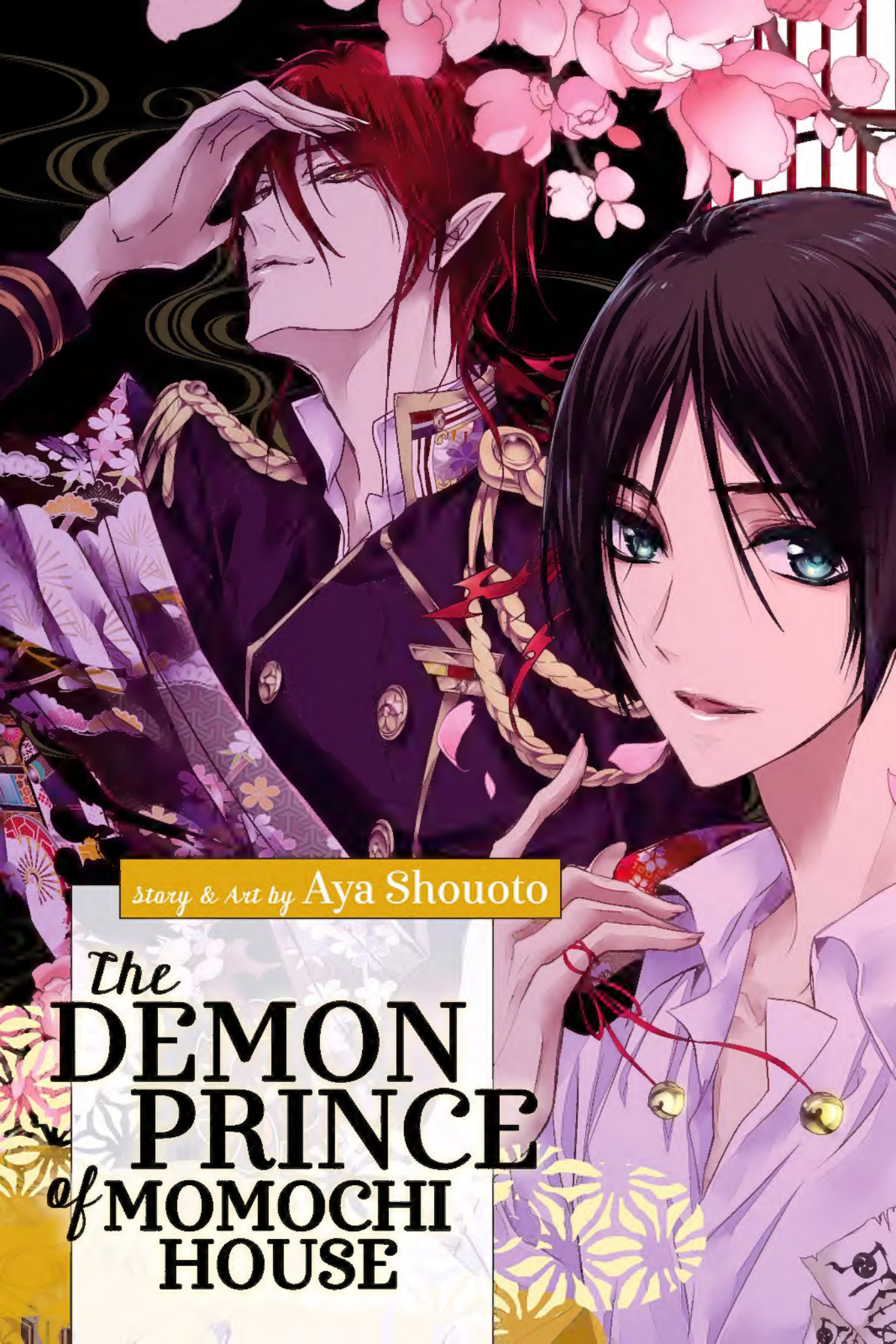
Kagome
Kagome



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The Mysterious Residents of Momochi House

Aoi Nanamori

When he was 7 years old, he wandered into Momochi House and was chosen as the Omamori-sama. He transforms into a nue to perform his duties, but it seems this role was meant for Himari.

Omamori-sama (Nue)

An ayakashi, or demon, with the ears of a cat, the wings of a bird, and the tail of a fox. As the Omamori-sama, the nue protects Momochi House and eliminates demons who make their way in from the spiritual realm.

Yukari

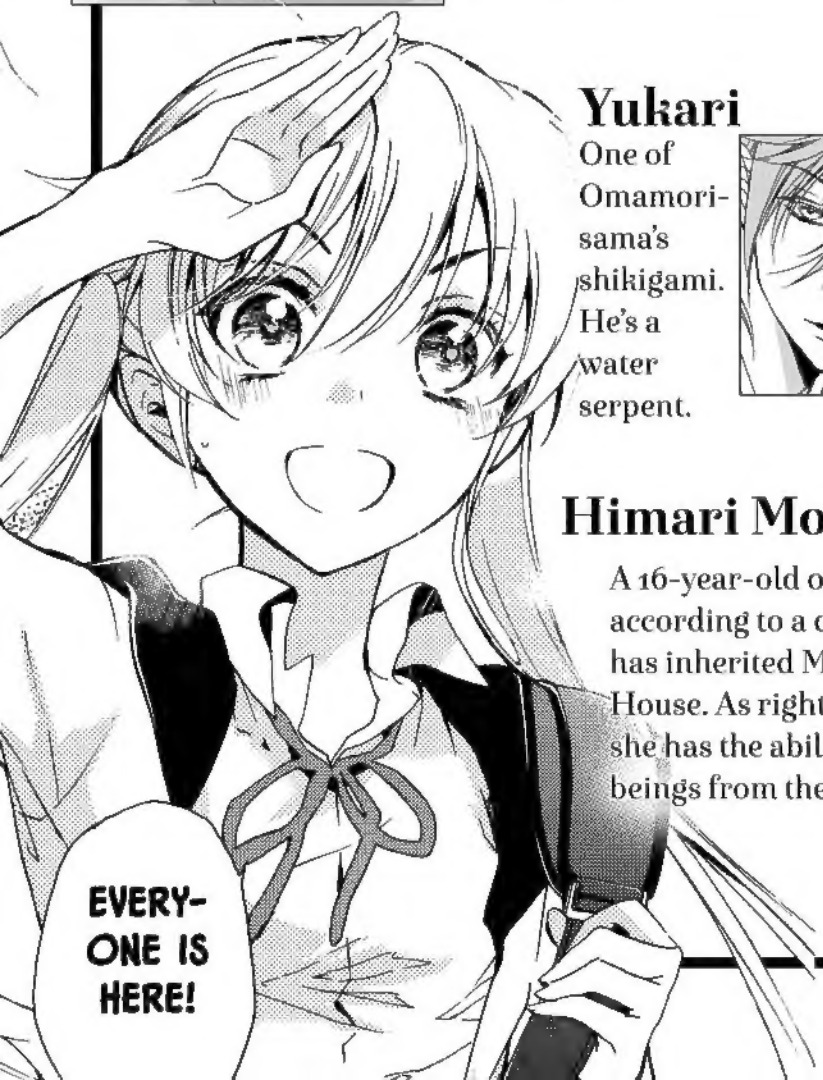
One of Omamori-sama's shikigami. He's a water serpent.

Ise

One of Omamori-sama's shikigami. He's an orangutan.

Himari Momochi

A 16-year-old orphan who, according to a certain will, has inherited Momochi House. As rightful owner, she has the ability to expel beings from the house.

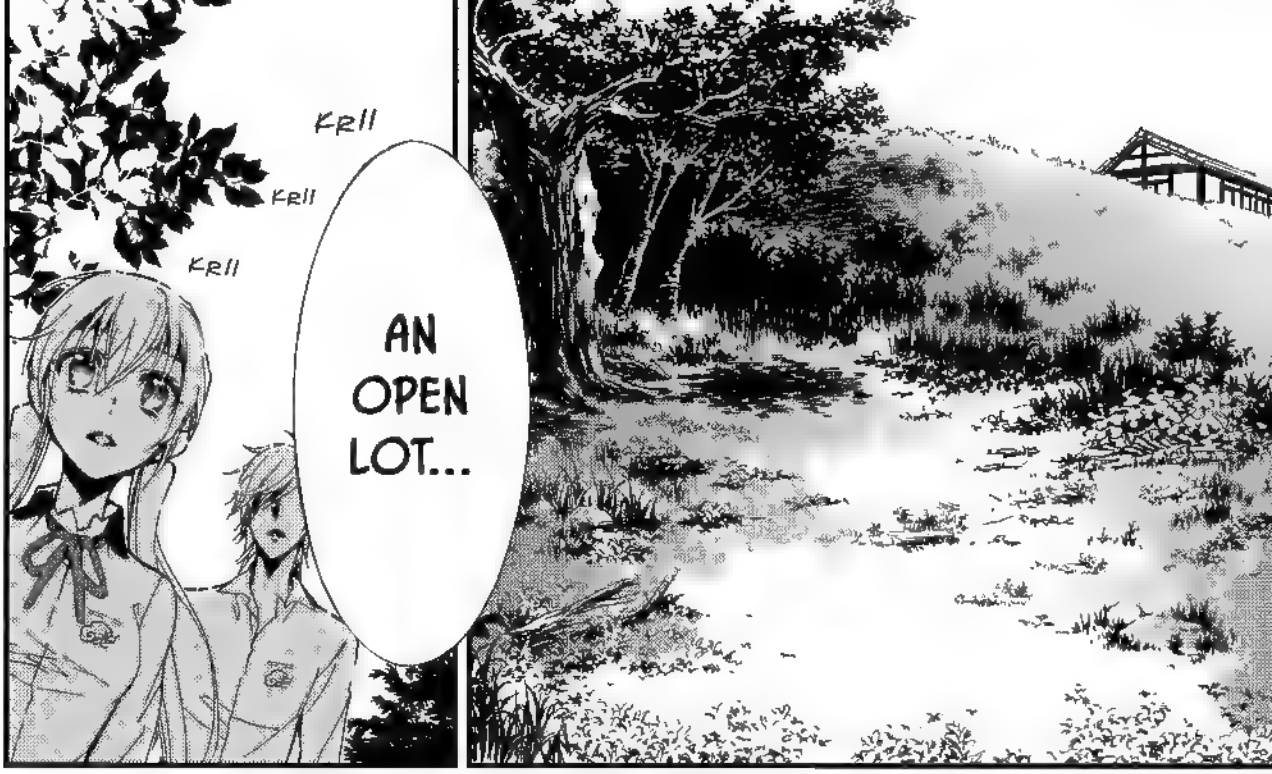


Lesser Yokai

Momochi House: Story Thus Far

Himari is depressed after being rejected by Aoi, and she doesn't understand why he's more affectionate than usual. Himari meets the new substitute teacher at school named Takamura Nachi, who is an occult fanatic. He gives Himari the "Seeing Mirror" that transports her inside it. The mirror makes the sorrow in one's heart disappear. Himari's interactions with Aoi and the nue in the mirror world cause her to reevaluate her feelings. Despite being rejected, Himari resolves to do whatever she can to free him from Momochi House, but Aoi has fallen into a slump. Aoi's old friend Nekobaba comes to Momochi House and tries to get Aoi back to normal, but nothing seems to work. Himari follows Nekobaba's advice and investigates Aoi's family. She uses Mr. Nachi's old town map to find the Nanamori house...

HOW OLD IS THIS MAP?
ERIII
I SEE ...
ERIII
...ACCORDING TO MR. NACHI.
WELL... IT'S OVER TEN YEARS OLD...
ERIII
I WAS JUST A KID THEN.
WHY WOULD HE HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THIS? HE'S NEW TO THE AREA.
HE COLLECTS OLD THINGS AS A HOBBY.
A MAP WITH THE NANAMORI NAME ON IT...!
TMP
WE'RE HERE.
ERIII
I WONDER IF IT'S REAL.
YEAH...
I HOPE IT'S REAL.


KRII
KRII
KRII
AN OPEN LOT...

REM-NANTS...
THEY'RE QUITE OLD.
THESE ARE REMNANTS OF A HOUSE.
LOOK...
TMP
SO AOI'S HOME WOULD'VE BEEN...

KAGOME PARK IS SURROUNDED BY THOSE DARK TREES.
SEE OVER THERE?
NO ONE LIVES HERE ANYMORE THOUGH.

SOOF
WHAT ?
KRIII
SO THAT'S ...
JUST NOW...
YOU SAW THE KAGOME PARK GHOST?!

HOW COULD THE TWO OF YOU GO THERE WITHOUT US?!
HUH?
NO, WE WENT FOR OTHER REASONS.
B-BMP
HIMARI...
...IS NEW HERE. SHE ISN'T FAMILIAR WITH THE AREA, SO I WAS GIVING HER A TOUR.
JUST LIKE IN THOSE OLD NEIGH-BORHOOD TALES...
WELL...
I DON'T KNOW IF IT WAS A GHOST, BUT THERE DEFINITELY WAS A MAN WEARING A SCHOOL UNIFORM WITH A BLACK CAPE.
WE JUST HAPPENED TO SEE HIM.
SO THERE REALLY IS A KAGOME PARK GHOST...
MRMR
OTHERS HAVE SAID THEY'VE SEEN HIM TOO.
LET'S PROVE IT...
...BY INVESTIGATING THE SITE.
...

THE KAGOME PARK GHOST EXISTS.

BUT...

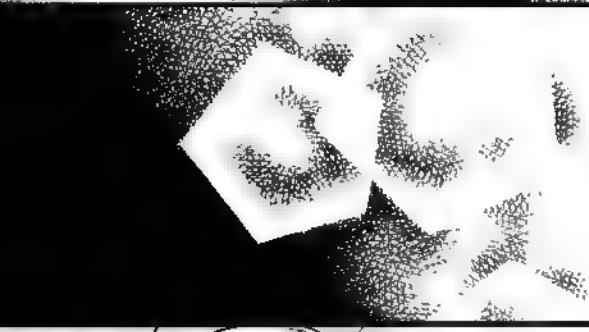
Kagome Park
KAGOME PARK...?
AOI...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M FINE.
AOI...

I HAD THOUGHT YOUR SLUMP...
...WELL...
...WAS DUE TO FEELING GUILTY ABOUT HURTING HIMARI...
...BUT MAYBE IT'S SOME-THING...
...DEEPER THAN THAT.
YUKARI?
AOI...
HAVE YOU...
...LOST SOMETHING PRECIOUS TO YOU?

TMP
AND THE MOUNTAIN IS IN FRONT OF US.
IT'S BECAUSE WE'RE SURROUNDED BY TREES.
IT'S STILL EVENING, BUT IT'S REALLY DARK.
TMP
TMP
EEK!
OH, IT'S JUST A BIRD...
FWAP
SO THIS IS...
...KAGOME PARK.

KLINK
KIDS USED TO PLAY HERE WHEN I WAS LITTLE...
...BUT STORIES ABOUT THE GHOST SCARED EVERYONE AWAY.
KREE
KREE
IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE A PARK AT ALL.

IT'S AN OLD GHOST STORY...
THE GHOST WEARING A SCHOOL UNIFORM...
...WHISPERS TO A LONE CHILD.
DO YOU WANT TO LOOK?
ALL THE KIDS WHO DID HAVE DISAPPEARED.
HEY, LET'S GO HOME.
IT'S GETTING DARK.
BUT THAT'S WHEN HE APPEARS.
THAT'S WHAT WE CAME HERE FOR.
NO WAY... REALLY?


BUT WHAT WE SAW YESTERDAY...

I'VE SEEN A SEAL WITH THIS DESIGN BEFORE...
HEY, YOU GUYS...
FLUT
HUH?

OH NO... IT'S GOING TO RAIN.
!
MAYBE WE SHOULD GO.

I THINK WE'RE MISSING SOMEONE.
ONE...
HUH...?

SHAA
EEK!
THE WIND IS SO STRONG!
WHERE'S IT COMING FROM?
TWO...
THREE...
FOUR!
FIVE, SIX...
SEVEN, EIGHT...
NINE IS AN UNLUCKY NUMBER.
WHAT?!
WHO IS SAYING THAT?
NO ONE HERE WAS TALKING.
WHOSE VOICE IS THIS?

LET'S TAKE ONE OUT...
...TO MAKE IT EIGHT.
YEEK!
!
IS...
KREEE
IS IT THE KAGOME PARK GHOST?!
SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
WE'RE STILL KIDS...
I GET IT NOW...
SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF

...TO SOME-THING BIGGER THAN US...
...THAT COULD SWALLOW US WHOLE.
WHO IS THAT BEHIND YOU?
WISH

BWE
HYAAAH!
HUH...?!
BUSTED!

I WAS SUSPICIOUS WHEN YOU CARRIED SUCH A LARGE BAG HERE.
YOU PRETENDED TO DISAPPEAR, THEN YOU CHANGED WHILE EVERYONE WAS PREOCCUPIED.
HOW SILLY ARE YOU?
YOU'RE SO SKINNY.
DID YOU THINK I COULDN'T TELL IT WAS YOU IN THE DARK?
I SEE... IT WAS YOU, SENOO...
HA HA
IT REALLY IS...
LOOKS LIKE IT.
I KNEW SOMETHING WAS ODD WHEN HAYATO COULD SEE THE GHOST YESTERDAY.
I THOUGHT IF I DRESSED LIKE THIS AND THE STORIES STARTED SPREADING AGAIN...
...PEOPLE WOULD COME FORWARD TO TALK ABOUT THEIR PAST MEMORIES. IT WOULD'VE HELPED OUR RESEARCH...
THAT WAS WHY.
WHY...
...DID YOU DO IT?
BUT...
...THE KAGOME PARK GHOST REALLY DOES EXIST!
YOU STUPID OCCULT FREAK!
FWP

...YOU AREN'T THE TYPE TO TRICK PEOPLE.
I KNOW...
...
I'M SORRY.
YOU SCARED EVERYONE. YOU SHOULD APOLOGIZE.
WHERE DID YOU GET IT?
THAT'S AN OLD CAPE.
YOU LOOK GOOD IN THAT.
Let me take your picture.
LET'S GO HOME.
WELL, I GUESS IT WAS KIND OF FUN.
RUI DOESN'T SCARE EASILY.
HUH...? I DON'T REMEMBER.

HER FAMILY RUNS A DOJO.
No wonder!
ALL OF YOU HAVE KNOWN ONE ANOTHER FOR AGES.
ACTU-ALLY...
...I WAS ALWAYS A LONER.
BUT EVEN I THINK...
...SENOO HAS BEEN ACTING ODDLY TODAY.
HM?
I BELIEVE WHAT HE SAID.
THE KAGOME PARK GHOST DOES EXIST.
I TOLD YOU...
...I SAW HIM WHEN I WAS A KID.

NOW THAT I THINK BACK, IF I HAD SEEN HIM, HE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN A GHOST.
SO HE WAS SOMEONE IN DISGUISE? LIKE SENOO?
PROB-ABLY.

A MAN DRESSED IN BLACK.
DO YOU WANT TO LOOK?
CHILDREN WERE DISAPPEARING.

TO BE HONEST...
...I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER MUCH. I JUST GET A BAD FEELING WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT.

MAYBE...
...
...HAYATO'S LOST MEMORIES...

I CAN TELL I'M SLOWLY LOSING MY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES.
I HATE FORGET-TING...
...THESE THINGS.
WE ALL GROW UP AND FORGET.
...ARE RELATED TO WHAT HAPPENED TO AOI.

MEMORIES...

THAT'S WHY HE'S CLINGING TO THESE OLD GHOST STORIES.
MAYBE SENOO FEELS THE SAME WAY.

...SHOULD NEVER BE STOLEN.

FROM ANYONE.

AND IF YOU DO FIND IT...
...TAKE THIS PATH.
THAT'S WHY...
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
TMP
THIS IS THE PATH TO MOMOCHI HOUSE.
MOMOCHI HOUSE IS HARD TO FIND.
BE CAREFUL ON THE WAY BACK!
See you tomorrow!
SWF
SWF
SWF

VOON
TMP
...IT'S BECAUSE...
GRIN
SENOO... IS THAT YOU?

I FINALLY MADE IT.
THAT ISN'T SENOO'S VOICE.
WHO ARE YOU?!
ARE YOU AN AYAKASHI?!
A CHILD WAS ONCE INVITED INTO MOMOCHI HOUSE.
I WONDER IF HE IS STILL INSIDE...

WHO IS THAT BEHIND YOU...?

HIMARI! HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED?!
AOI!!
DASH
SHUP
I'LL NEVER ALLOW A STRANGER LIKE YOU...
...TO ENTER MOMOCHI HOUSE!
THOOOM
SHF
SO I HAVE TO MAKE YOU INVITE ME IN?

HIMARI!

HE'S OUTSIDE OUR TERRITORY.
IS THAT AN AYAKASHI?!
URK...
THAT'S IRREL-EVANT.
GO FORTH, SHIKIGAMI.
DESTROY HIM.

WHAT...?
GRIP
...
STOP, NUE!
DON'T... ATTACK HIM!
THIS IS SENOO!
DON'T ATTACK!

DON'T!
DO YOU WANT TO BE CRUSHED?
YOUR POWER HAS NO EFFECT OUTSIDE MOMOCHI HOUSE.
GET OUT!
HEY, YOU!
GET OUT OF SENOO'S BODY!
I DON'T WANT YOU TO HURT ANYONE!

BRING THEM BOTH IN.
YES!
YUKARI, ISE...!

BIND!
SWISH
SENOO!

PURIFY!
ARGGH...
DASH
SENOO...!

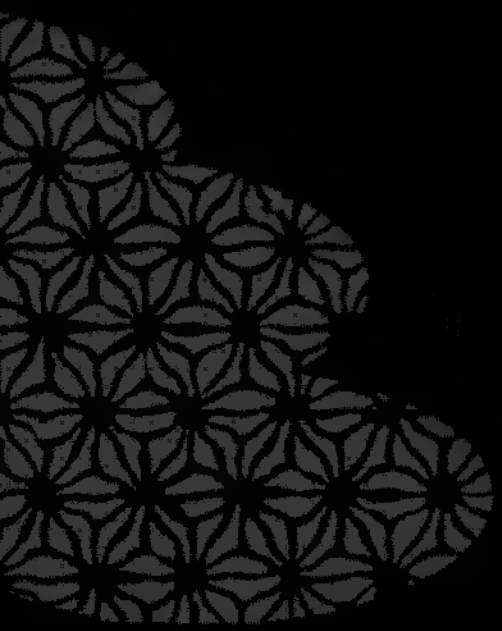
WE DIDN'T HURT THE KID.
STAY BACK.
SEE?
IT'S RELEASING HIM.
WHAM

THERE.
...IS TAKING HUMAN FORM...?!
VOON
THE CAPE...
I'VE FINALLY BEEN INVITED INTO MOMOCHI HOUSE.
VISH
!

HAS AOI GROWN UP?
VOON

I GRATEFULLY ACCEPT...

Chapter 24 End



The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

WOOOSH
CHAPTER 25
THANKS FOR INVITING ME INSIDE.
WHRR
THAT SHADOW...
...IS NOW A MASS OF SWIRLING BLACK FEATHERS...
WHOOSH

CHAPTER 25

The Bird in the Cage

I DUMPED THE KID WITH THE GLASSES IN THE GARDEN.
WHAT'S GOING ON, YUKARI?
I TOLD ZUSHI AND THE LESSER YOKAI...
...TO CHECK THE HOUSE FOR ANYTHING UNUSUAL.
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ANYTHING IS AMISS...

YOU IDIOT!
HE ENTERED MOMOCHI HOUSE! NEVER UNDERES-TIMATE A SHADOW!
GRAH
POOF
MAYBE THE BLACK SHADOW LEFT IN A FLURRY OF BLACK FEATHERS?
AOI...
I CAN'T SENSE HIM ANYWHERE.
BUT...
SNIFF
HAS AOI GROWN UP?
THE SHADOW SAID SOMETHING TO YOU.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT HE MEANT?

AOI, HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE KAGOME PARK GHOST?
THAT SHADOW...
NO... I DON'T.
I UNDERSTAND YOU'RE RESEARCHING IT.
I HEARD IT AT A PARK I USED TO PLAY AT AS A KID.
YEAH. IT'S AN OLD TALE.
IS THAT SHADOW AN AYAKASHI?
IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME THAT HE WAS POSSESSED.
I THOUGHT HE WAS JUST FOOLING AROUND...
YES. SENOO WAS TRYING TO SCARE US BY DRESSING UP AS THAT GHOST.

Tsukumogami: The spirit of an old object that came into being as an ayakashi.
A TSUKUMOGAMI LURKING IN THE OLD CAPE...
...MAY HAVE POSSESSED HIM.
...
YEAH...

MASTER AOI!
I CHECKED THE ENTIRE HOUSE. NOTHING HAS CHANGED!
SMP
ALL SEALS ARE INTACT.

IT COULD BE MANY THINGS.
ENTERING MOMOCHI HOUSE WOULD GREATLY INCREASE HIS POWERS.
IT'S NOT UNUSUAL FOR SOMEONE ON THE VERGE OF BECOMING AN AYAKASHI TO WANT TO GET IN.

TSUKUMO-GAMI?
I WONDER WHY HE WANTED TO ENTER MOMOCHI HOUSE.
I WONDER IF HE IS STILL INSIDE.
I GRATE-FULLY ACCEPT YOUR INVITATION TO ENTER.

WHO, ME?
HIMARI, WHAT ABOUT YOU?
IS THERE ANYTHING IN HERE ONLY YOU CAN SEE?
REMEMBER WHEN KASHA SET THAT TRAP?
THANKS, ZUSHI, EVERYONE.
LET'S TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AROUND THE HOUSE.
I DON'T TRUST THE WORK OF AN AMATEUR.
GRAB
HMPH.
HYO
...ANYTHING RIGHT NOW.
I DON'T THINK I SEE...
WELL...

OH.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE...
...YUKARI ?
AH.
I WAS WONDERING IF THERE WERE ANY TSUKUMO-GAMI IN THESE OLD KIMONOS.
I WANTED TO ASK IF THEY SENSED ANY SIMILAR SPIRITS.
OLD KIMONOS, HUH?
LOOK.
THIS KIMONO IS FROM WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD.
YOU KEPT IT.
IT'S SO SMALL...
HOW IS THE HOUSE?
I CHECKED THE SEAL AT THE BACK. IT'S INTACT.
ISE AND THE OTHERS SAID THE SAME.
I SEE...

YOU SEEM WORRIED, YUKARI.
IT'S NOT THAT I FEEL A DARK PRESENCE...
...BUT...
...I FEEL UNEASY.
YUKARI...
...I'M HUMAN. ISN'T THAT ODD?
AS IF...

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO BECOME AN AYAKASHI?
WELL...
...I CAN'T SAY FOR CERTAIN.
BUT FIRST, I FELT DISTANT FROM EVERYTHING.
FROM EMOTIONS LIKE SADNESS.
AND SUFFERING.

HOW ABOUT YOU, AOI?
HUH?
EVEN LOVE.
SINCE COMING TO MOMOCHI HOUSE...
...HAVE YOU LOST SOMETHING PRECIOUS?
IS IT...

...SOMETHING YOU'RE PREPARED TO LOSE?
MOMOCHI HOUSE...
A MAN OF SHADOWS...
THE KAGOME PARK GHOST...
BLACK FEATHERS...
I THOUGHT I HAD ACCEPTED IT.
I CAN'T REALLY REMEMBER...

VOOM
HIMARI...
AOI?

WHY ARE YOU UP SO LATE?
I THINK...
...THE WIND IS KEEPING ME UP.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, HIMARI?
TAMAMO.

HE HAD A BAD DREAM BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED EARLIER TODAY.
I JUST PUT HIM BACK TO BED.
YAWN
I GUESS AYAKASHI CAN HAVE NIGHTMARES TOO.

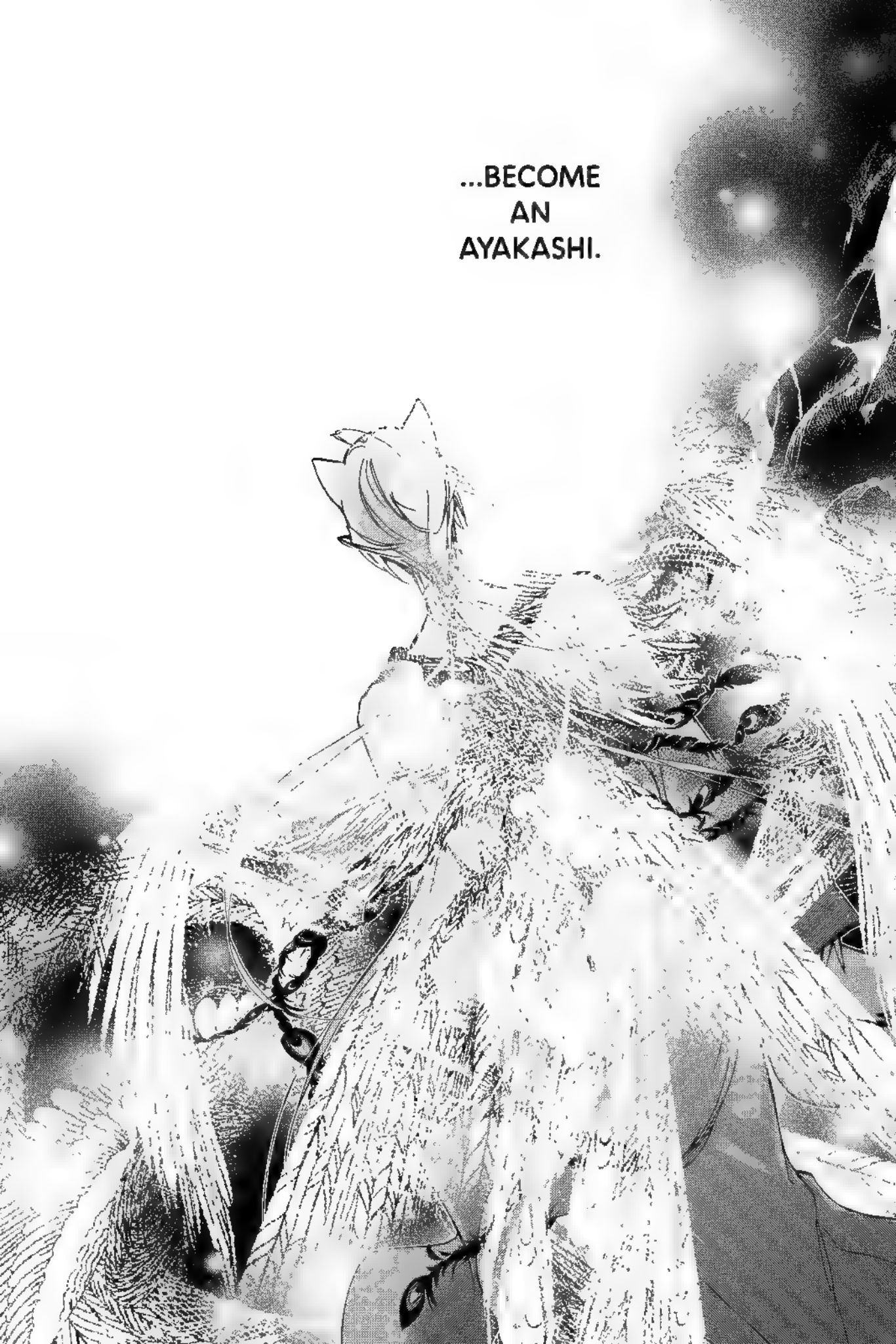
AOI!
CUDDLE
... HIMARI?
WILL YOU PUT ME TO BED TOO...
HUG

FOR SOME REASON, I FEEL AFRAID.
AOI?
THAT SHADOW LOOKED AT ME...
...AND CALLED ME "AOI," NOT "NUE."
HAS AOI GROWN UP?
IF HE REMEMBERS WHO I AM...
...HE CAN'T BE HUMAN.
HE MUST BE AN AYAKASHI.
BUT...
HAYATO TOLD ME THAT HE MET THE KAGOME PARK GHOST.
AOI.
IS IT POSSIBLE...

...YOU MET THE KAGOME PARK GHOST TOO?
AN OLD TALE ABOUT CHILDREN DISAPPEARING...
I...
...CAN'T REMEMBER.
...
SORRY!
WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT OLD GHOST STORIES?
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU!

I MEAN...
SUFF
...YOU HAVEN'T DISAPPEARED.
YOU'RE RIGHT HERE.
YOU'RE JUST TRAPPED IN MOMOCHI HOUSE FOR NOW.

BLUSH
HUG
AOI...
IT'S NOT THAT.
I NEVER REALIZED THAT NOT BEING ABLE TO REMEMBER...
...WOULD BE SO PAINFUL.
I THOUGHT I'D SIMPLY FORGET EVERYTHING...
...AND ONE DAY...


...BECOME
AN
AYAKASHI.

BUT...
...IF I DO...
...CAN I TRULY...

...PROTECT YOU?
YUP

MAY I...
...KISS YOU?
W-WHY?!
WHAT?!
BLUSH

BECAUSE I WANT TO.
N-NO IT WAS SETTLED
AOI YOU'RE THE ONE...

SORRY.
I KNOW...
...YOU DIDN'T SEE ME IN THAT WAY.
...WHO TOLD ME...
I KNOW I SAID THAT, BUT...
IS IT SOMETHING YOU'RE PREPARED TO LOSE?

OH MY.
HON-ESTLY...
WHEN WILL THE CAGED BIRD FLY FREE?
HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO WAIT?
I GUESS I HAVE NO CHOICE.
WHEN NIGHT FALLS...
"WHO IS THAT BEHIND YOU?"

GYAAAAH!
DASH
ONE OF OUR YOKAI?!
IT'S COMING FROM THE GATE.
HIMARI, GO GET YUKARI AND ISE!
YES!
JOLT
MASTER AOI!!
WHAT'S WRONG?
HYOOO
IT HAPPENED SO SUDDENLY...

WHY DID HE GET SO BIG...?
MAYBE HE ATE SOME-THING?
TAIKOMOCHI TURNED INTO THIS!
WE HAVE TO CALM HIM DOWN.
THIP
WHO IS THAT BEHIND YOU?

ZUSHI?
GRIN
SWIP
GRAB
ZUSHI ?!
THIS ISN'T A JOKE.
THIS IS NO TIME FOR JOKING AROUND!
TUG

A TSUKUMO-GAMI COULDN'T DO THIS.
ARE YOU POSSESSED?! SNAP OUT OF IT!
RH H
VOOH
THOOM
H M
OH
NOT YET...
I WON'T LET YOU TURN INTO THE NUE.
AOI...
REMEMBER
THAT BLACK SHADOW.

WHR
RR
LEAN
THIS VOICE...
THAT'S RIGHT.
REMEMBER.
THE MORE YOU REMEMBER...

AOI!!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING, ZUSHI?!
STAY BACK!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
?!
...THE STRONGER OUR BOND WILL BECOME.

I...
...CAN'T MOVE...
...
WHAT'S WRONG, YOU TWO?
Urgh...
HIMARI, STAND BACK.
JUST WHAT...
...IS GOING ON?
THIS...
...IS NOT THE WORK OF AN AYAKASHI.

WHO IS THAT BEHIND YOU?

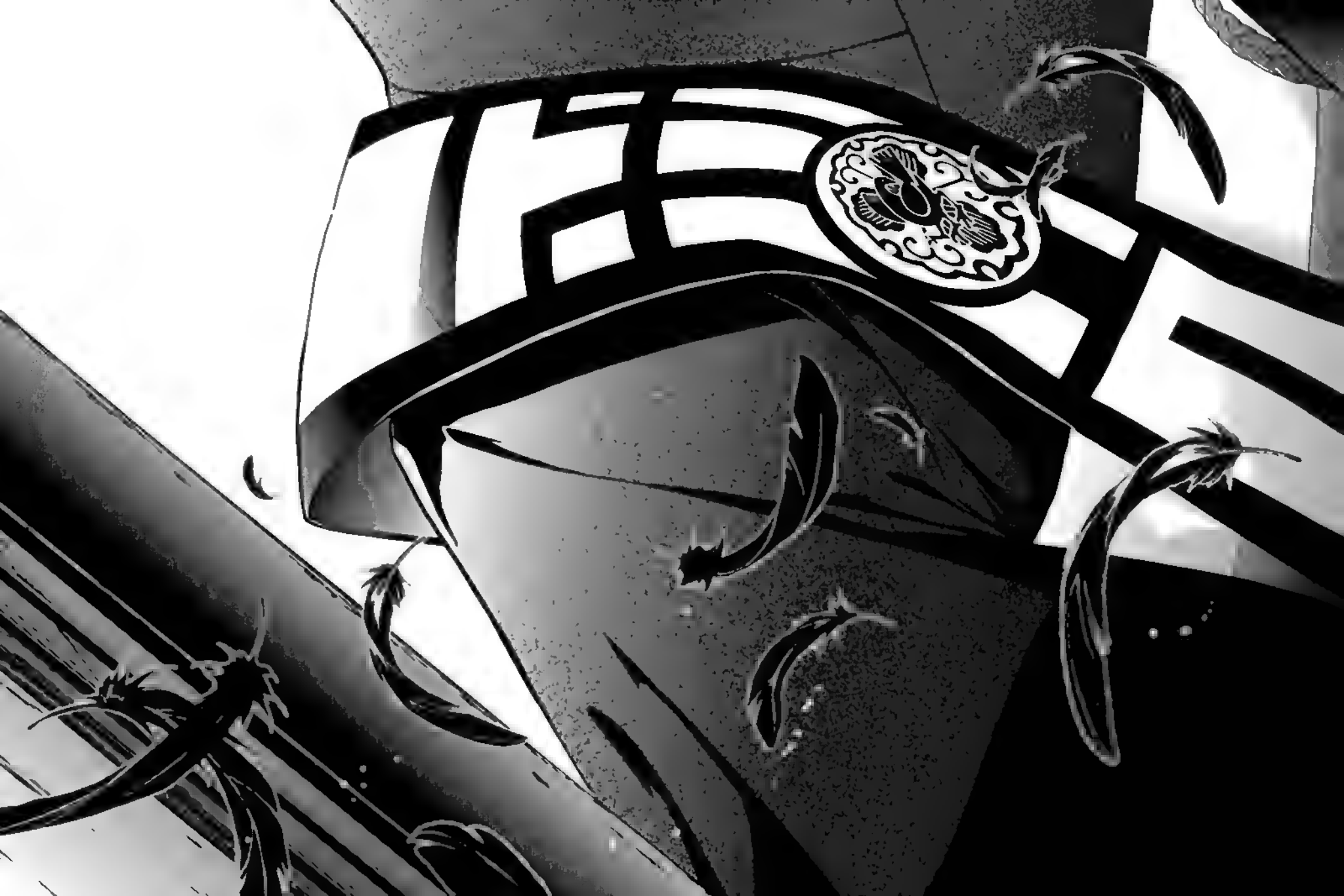
I KNOW YOU.

I KNOW YOU.

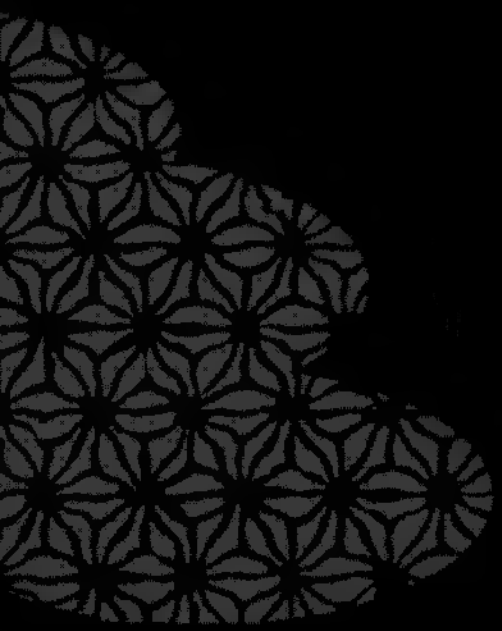
?!
YOU FINALLY REMEMBERED ME.

I FINALLY FOUND MY WAY IN.
THAT FACE...!
KRE
EEE
E

SHING



KREEE
MR. NACHI...
IT WAS...
...THE SOUND OF A DOOR WHICH SHOULD NOT BE OPENED.
Chapter 25 End



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CHAPTER 26
YOU CAN SEE THAT, CAN'T YOU?
HE WAS ALWAYS IN THE PARK.
HE WAS ALWAYS ALONE TOO.
SO...
THIS IS OUR LITTLE SECRET.
HE BELIEVED ME AND SAID I WASN'T A LIAR.
HE TAUGHT ME ABOUT AYAKASHI.

CHAPTER 26

Who Is That Behind You?

YOU REMEMBERED ME. THAT CREATED A PATH FOR ME...
...TO FINALLY ENTER MOMOCHI HOUSE.
SO YOU REALLY HAVE BEEN TRAPPED IN HERE ALL THIS TIME...
POOR THING.
...AOI.
I'VE COME FOR YOU...
HUH ...?
I'LL SET YOU FREE...
...FROM THIS EVIL HOUSE THAT BINDS YOU.

HE CAN FREE AOI FROM MOMOCHI HOUSE?!
JUST WHO ARE YOU, MR. NACHI?
FWIP
BUT...
I'M NOT A TEACHER.
THIS IS MY TRUE PROFES-SION.
SHING
...I'M FAR REMOVED FROM ANYTHING HOLY.
I'M NOT ONE TO MERELY HOPE AND PRAY.

THESE ARE SHIKIGAMI ...!
OH, RIGHT. "SHIKIGAMI."
THAT'S WHAT YOU CALL YOUR SERVANTS.
THESE AYAKASHI ARE CONTROLLED BY ME.
THAT IS MY POWER.
MR. NACHI...
YOU KNEW AOI?
TMP
IS IT TRUE YOU CAME TO MOMOCHI HOUSE TO FREE HIM?
THAT'S RIGHT.
IS THAT WHY HE CAME...
..HERE?

AOI CAN LEAVE MOMOCHI HOUSE...
...AS MY SHIKIGAMI.
I'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS MOMENT.
WHIP

HIMARI! STAY THERE!
AOI...!
TMP
COME, AOI.
WHIRL
SURRENDER TO ME MOMOCHI HOUSE...
...AND YOUR POWERS AS THE OMAMORI-SAMA.

WHY DIDN'T I REALIZE IT BEFORE?
BLACK FEATHERS...
IT WAS YOU ALL ALONG...!
HAS AOI...
EVER SINCE...
THE CROW CREST ON THAT PAPER SEAL...

...THAT DAY.
...GROWN UP?
EVERYTHING...
BECOME MY POWER.
SHOOF
WHY?

WHY?
THEY'RE SCAT-TERING...
KRIII
KRIII

THIS CHILD SEEMS TO BE POSSESSED BY EVIL VISIONS AND DELUSIONS.
HE DISTURBS HIS PARENTS BY SPEAKING OF MONSTERS AND SPIRITS.
WILL YOU GUIDE HIM TO THE PATH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS?
..
HE IS BURDENED WITH MYSTERIOUS POWERS.
RID YOURSELF OF EVIL THOUGHTS, TAKAMURA NACHI.
BUT I REALLY SEE THEM.
IN LIGHT AND IN DARK...
HERE AND THERE...
THEY EXIST

ALL THIS
WILL NOT HELP ME OVERCOME WORLDLY DESIRES OR THOSE BEINGS
I WANT THE POWER TO CONTROL THEM!
A HOUSE REFERENCED IN ANCIENT LITERATURE
A HOUSE LOCATED ON THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THIS WORLD AND THE SPIRITUAL REALM
THERE'S AN OLD LEGEND ABOUT A HAUNTED HOUSE UP IN THE MOUNTAINS
"MOMOCHI HOUSE."

KIDS HAVE DISAPPEARED IN THESE MOUNTAINS. THEY SHOULD STAY AWAY.
INTER-ESTING.
THERE'S AN OLD LEGEND THAT A CHILD HAS SEEN THIS MYSTERIOUS HOUSE.
A CHILD, HUH?
THE HOUSE IS WAITING FOR THE RETURN OF ITS MASTER...
...THE OMA-MORI-SAMA.
AND THE HOUSE SHALL CHOOSE ITS MASTER.
I AM NOT SUIT-ABLE?
IT'S SAID TO BE GUARDED BY A NOBLE AYAKASHI UNLIKE ANY OTHER.
FWAP
WHY?
WHY CAN'T I FIND IT?
GO FORTH.
LOOK FOR A LANDMARK FROM THE SKY—
YOU WON'T FIND IT.
SWFF

I NEED A CHILD...
A CHILD...
NOT THIS ONE
A CHILD...
NOT THIS ONE
THERE'S A MYSTERIOUS HOUSE.
NO...
DO YOU WANT TO TAKE A LOOK?
HIS EYES ARE GOOD, BUT HE LACKS SPIRITUAL POWER.
A CHILD...
ONE THAT SMELLS SWEET, LIKE POME-GRANATE.
ONE THAT AN AYAKASHI WOULD LIKE.

IS HE YOUR FRIEND?

SHOULD I KIDNAP ONE OF THEM AT RANDOM?

THAT BIRD...

I FOUND HIM.
YOU CAN SEE HIM?
THIS IS OUR LITTLE SECRET.
...
I DON'T WANT TO BOTHER THEM.
AND EVERY DAY...
YOU'RE HERE EVERY DAY WHAT ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS FROM SCHOOL?
IT'S FINE.
WHAT'S WRONG?
POOR THING.
I... DON'T WANT TO GO HOME.
...MORE BRUISES.
THOSE WHO CAN "SEE" ARE OSTRACIZED BY THEIR FAMILY.
THEY SAY...
...MY LIES ARE RUINING MY FAMILY.

AFTER YOU GROW UP.

I'LL COME GET YOU SOON.

DON'T WORRY.

THIS IS A SPELL THAT WILL BIND US TOGETHER.

DON'T LOSE IT.

ALL YOUR TROUBLES WILL GO AWAY.

I'LL WAIT UNTIL YOUR POWERS GROW...

NOW...

MAYBE EVERYONE WILL BE HAPPY IF YOU DISAPPEAR.

SO...

THERE'S AN ABANDONED HOUSE IN THE MOUNTAINS.

WHY NOT...

...HIDE OUT THERE FOR A WHILE?

YOUR FAMILY WILL MISS YOU BEFORE LONG AND COME LOOKING FOR YOU.

SO...
MAYBE EVERYONE WILL BE HAPPY IF YOU DISAPPEAR.
THERE'S AN ABANDONED HOUSE IN THE MOUNTAINS.
WHY NOT...
...HIDE OUT THERE FOR A WHILE?
YOUR FAMILY WILL MISS YOU BEFORE LONG AND COME LOOKING FOR YOU.

AFTER YOU GROW UP.
DON'T WORRY.
I'LL COME GET YOU SOON.
THIS IS A SPELL THAT WILL BIND US TOGETHER.
DON'T LOSE IT.
ALL YOUR TROUBLES WILL GO AWAY.
I'LL WAIT UNTIL YOUR POWERS GROW...
NOW...

YOU USED MOMOCHI HOUSE'S POWER...

...TO DRAG OUT MY MEMORIES.

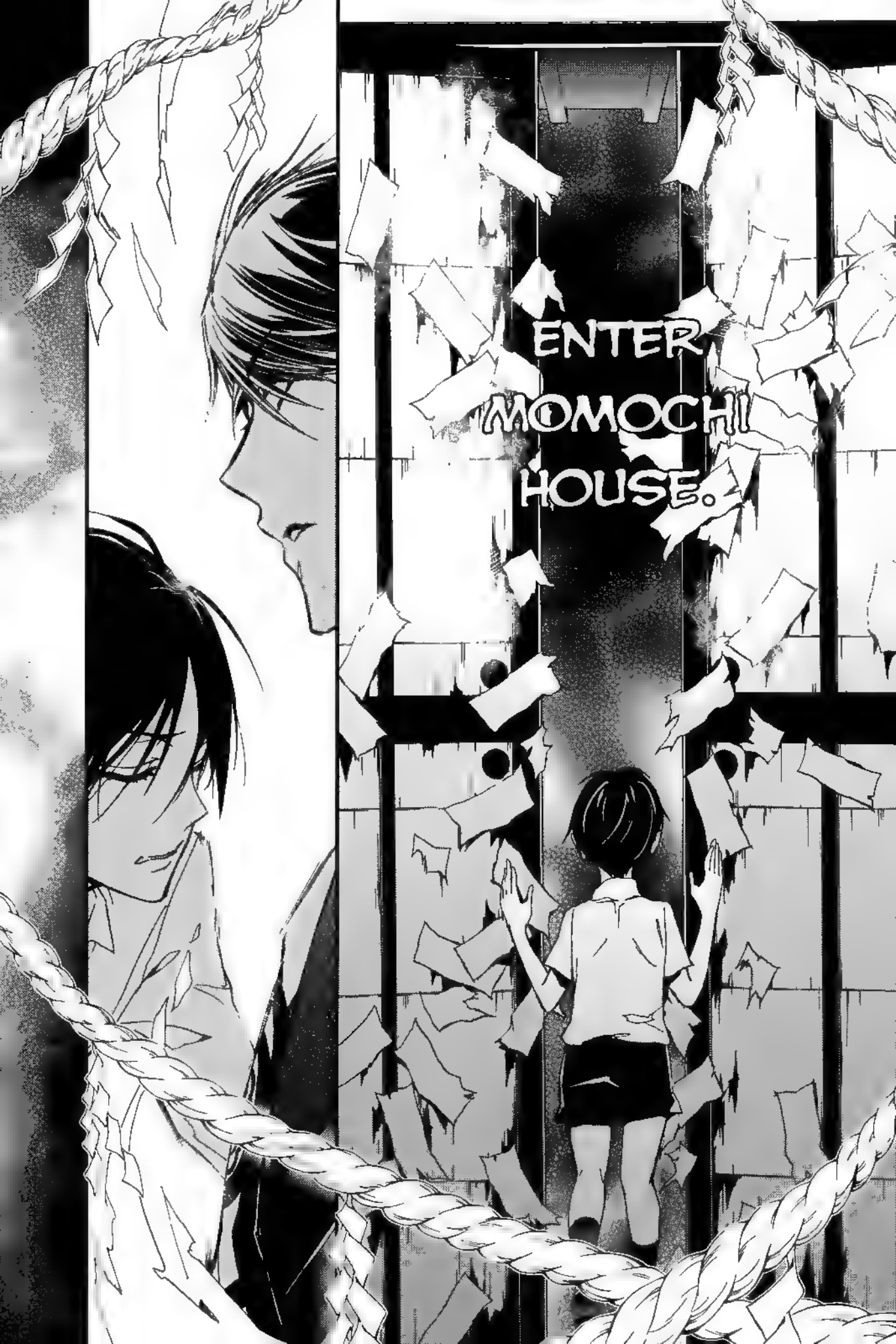
I DIDN'T...

...MEAN TO...

HUFF

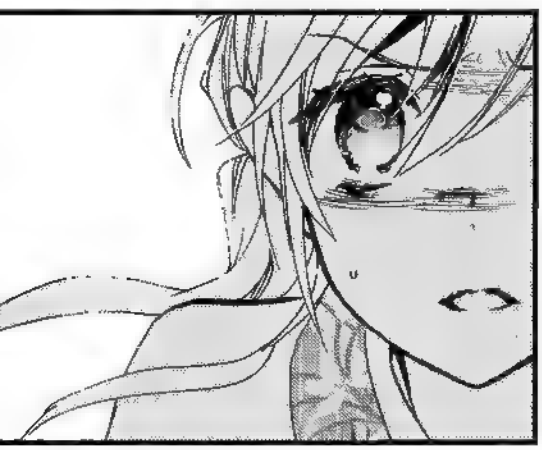
WHAT...?

ENTER MOMOCHI HOUSE.

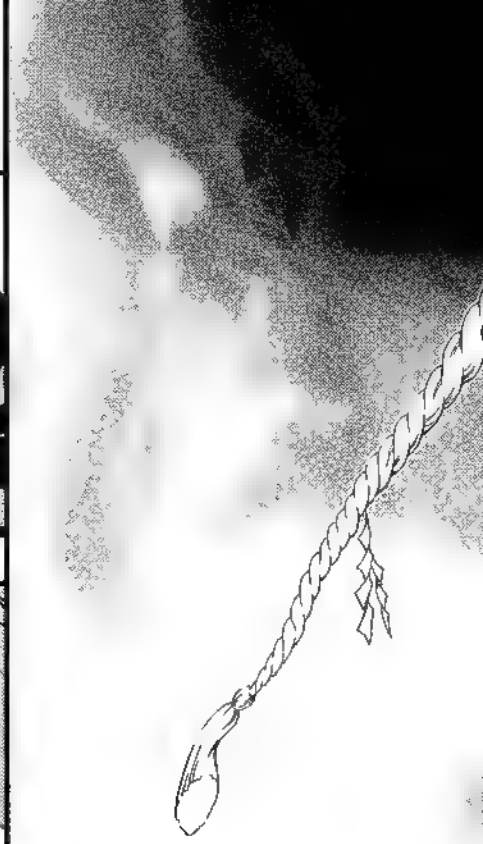

ENTER
MOMOCHI
HOUSE.

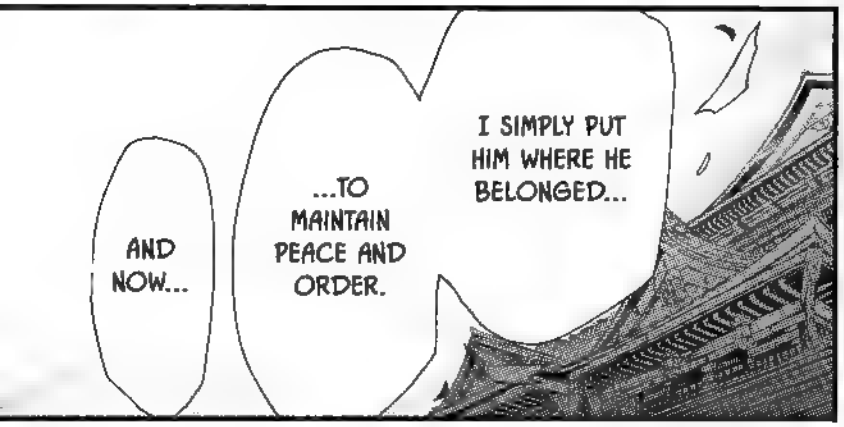
YOU USED MOMOCHI HOUSE'S POWER...
...TO DRAG OUT MY MEMORIES.

I DIDN'T...
...MEAN TO...
HUFF



WHAT...?



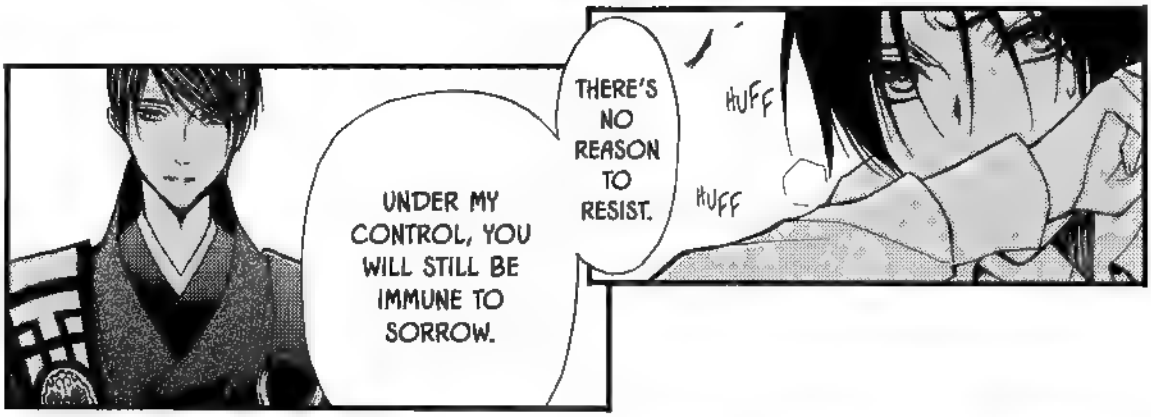


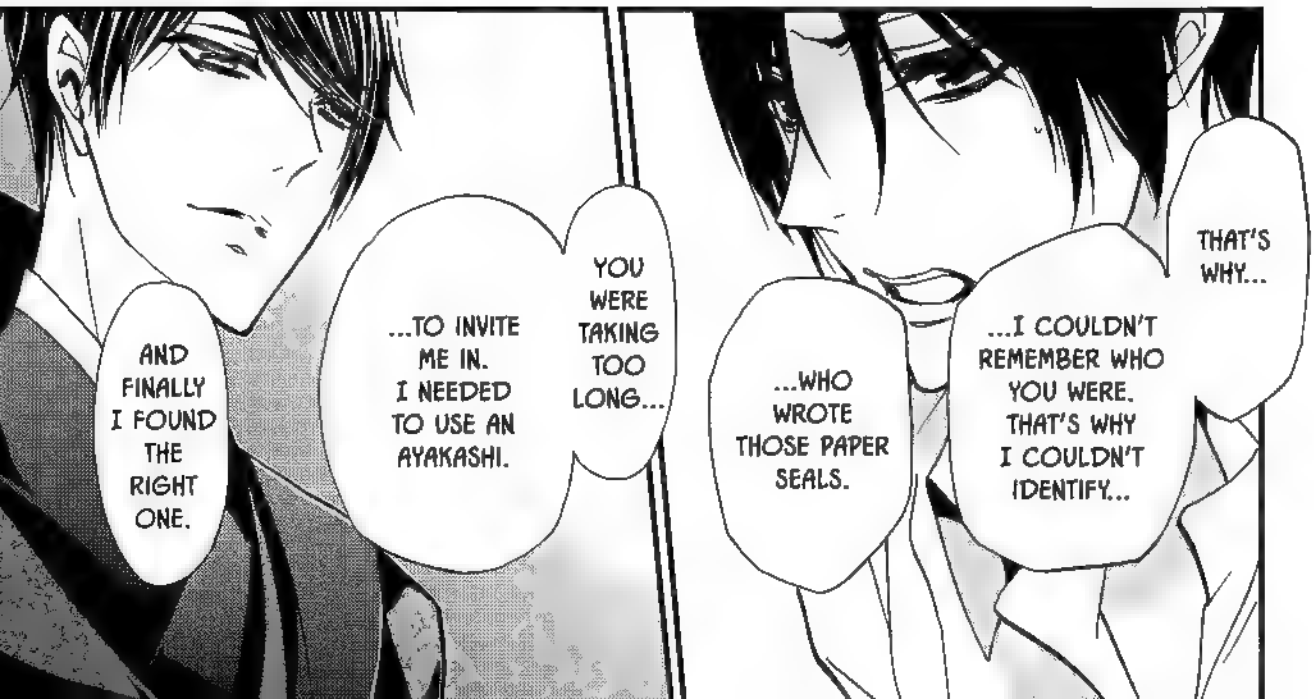
HE'S THE ONE WHO TRAPPED AOI INSIDE MOMOCHI HOUSE?

...I WILL CONTROL HIM AS MY SHIKIGAMI AND USE HIS POWER TO ESTABLISH ORDER.
AN AYAKASH DIDN'T DO THIS
IT WAS DONE BY A HUMAN.
WHAT...
...ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I DON'T WANT TO KNOW.
...
YOU UNDERSTAND, DON'T YOU, AOI?

YOU'RE SEEING MY MEMORIES AND THEY'RE RESONATING WITH YOU.
I WAS THE SAME.
I TOO WAS OSTRACIZED FOR HAVING SPIRITUAL POWERS.
OUR SOULS ARE VERY SIMILAR.
IT'S AS IF WE'RE A MIRROR IMAGE.
...
REEL
COME...
...AOI.

COME...!
FWSH


UNDER MY CONTROL, YOU WILL STILL BE IMMUNE TO SORROW.
THERE'S NO REASON TO RESIST.
HUFF
HUFF


AND FINALLY I FOUND THE RIGHT ONE.
...TO INVITE ME IN. I NEEDED TO USE AN AYAKASHI.
YOU WERE TAKING TOO LONG...
...WHO WROTE THOSE PAPER SEALS.
...I COULDN'T REMEMBER WHO YOU WERE. THAT'S WHY I COULDN'T IDENTIFY...
THAT'S WHY...

BECOME MY SHIKIGAMI...

...AOI...

...OR RATHER...

... "OMAMORI-SAMA."

...ENTRUST EVERYTHING TO ME.

YOUR SORROW, YOUR SOLITUDE...

SHUNK

SISH

!

SO HE WAS THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR CURSING RYUJIN WITH THAT WRETCHED SEAL...

DAMN!

DAMN!

WHY CAN'T I MOVE?!

SHAK

THSSH

SO HE WAS THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR CURSING RYUJIN WITH THAT WRETCHED SEAL...
DAMN IT!
DAMN IT!
WHY CAN'T I MOVE?!
SHUNK
!
SHAK
THSSH
SISH
YOUR SORROW, YOUR SOLITUDE...
...ENTRUST EVERYTHING TO ME.

BECOME MY SHIKIGAMI...
...AOI...
...OR RATHER...
... "OMAMORI-SAMA."

AOI!
...
...
STAY AWAY, HIMARI...
SHUNK
SUCH REBELLIOUS CHILDREN.
?!
HING
BRING HER HERE.

SMP
YOUR RAGE...
...IS FORCING MY HAND.
LEAVE HER ALONE!
HUH?!
GRAB

HIMARI MOMOCHI...
GRIP
UNLIKE THE NAME YOU BEAR, YOU ARE POWERLESS.

I-
THE LEAST YOU CAN DO IS HELP ME.
...
GRIP
OH
NOW...
...DELIVER A REQUIEM TO AOI.
MY BODY...
...IS MOVING ON ITS OWN.
I...
EVEN HIMARI ...?

NOT LIKE THIS.
NO...
YOU WILL TIE IT.
IT WILL SYMBOLIZE MY OWNERSHIP OF HIM.
BLINDFOLD HIM.
EVEN IF THIS FREES AOI FROM MOMOCHI HOUSE...
I... WON'T...!

LUNGE
...
SHING
OBEY ME!
YES...
WHAT DID YOU DO TO HER?
I USED A KOTODAMA.
*Kotodama: Words that have spiritual power.

...
A KOTO-DAMA...?
AS AN AYAKASHI, I CAN SEE IT.
HIS WORDS CAST AN EVIL SPELL.
...
NOW...
...THAT I KNOW...
KRRK
POK

I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO DO ANYTHING MORE WITHIN MOMOCHI HOUSE.

YOU ARE AN EVIL BEING...

...WHO BROUGHT HARM TO BOTH RYUJIN AND AOI.

ROAR

RRR

URGH...

ME NEITHER!

YUKARI!

FINAL

FINAL
YUKARI!

I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO DO ANYTHING MORE WITHIN MOMOCHI HOUSE.
YOU ARE AN EVIL BEING...
...WHO BROUGHT HARM TO BOTH RYUJIN AND AOI.
IROUP
KRRK
URGH...
ME NEITHER!

AOI!
YUKARI, I'M FINE FOR NOW.
THE AYAKASHI OF MOMOCHI HOUSE ARE POWERFUL.
BUT YOU CANNOT STOP ME.
JUST BRING ME THE-

SHING
MAKE THE CONTRACT.
QUICKLY.
TMP
OH
ZWOOSH
DASH

THIS BLIND-FOLD...

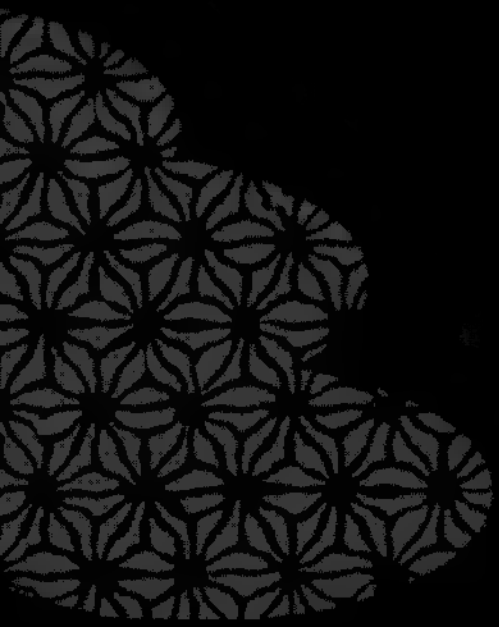
...WILL MAKE YOU MY SHIKIGAMI.

TMP

THP

THIS BLIND-FOLD...
...WILL MAKE YOU MY SHIKIGAMI.

HIMARI...



The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

...I FELT...
FOR A FLEETING MOMENT...
CHAPTER 27
When Night Dawns
...THAT IF I WERE TO LOSE MYSELF BY YOUR HAND...
...I COULD ACCEPT IT...
OH

PLIP

LET'S GO LOOK FOR THEM...
...AOI.
GRIT
I'M SORRY.
I...
I'M GOING TO FIND A WAY FOR YOU TO LEAVE MOMOCHI HOUSE!
HIMARI...
FORGIVE ME, HIMARI.
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN MY LIGHT.

OH...

OH...

BLUSH
I... TOLD YOU...
HIMARI...
!
NO KISSING!!
POW
OOSH
THE FEATHERS...!

SHRK
SHRK
SHRK
AOI!!
YUKARI!
IMPOS-
SIBLE.
THE KOTODAMA HAS BEEN BROKEN?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? HERE'S WHAT YOU WANTED.
THANK YOU, YUKARI.
TAKE CARE OF HIMARI.
AOI...
I'M FINE NOW.
VHM

YOUR POWER BRINGS ORDER TO A CHAOTIC WORLD.
IT CONTROLS PEOPLE AND AYAKASHI ALIKE...
NACHI.
YOUR KOTODAMA BINDS AND MAKES PEOPLE...
...SUBMIT TO YOU.
BUT I THINK YOU MUST HAVE BEEN LONELY.
...
WHAT ...?
WHEN I WAS LITTLE...
...YOU PROBABLY NEVER USED YOUR KOTODAMA ON ME.
EVEN SO...
...I CAME TO SEE YOU EVERY DAY.

WE SHARED THE SAME SOLITUDE...
...AND PAIN.
YOU WANTED TO SEND...
...SOMEONE LIKE YOURSELF INTO MOMOCHI HOUSE.
WE HAVE THE SAME POWERS.
BECAUSE I KNEW...
...YOU WERE LONELY, JUST LIKE I WAS.
YOU COULDN'T ENTER THIS HOUSE...
...THAT RESIDES BETWEEN THE TWO REALMS.
YOUR GRIEF...
THIS IS A SPELL THAT WILL BIND US TOGETHER.
DON'T LOSE IT.
THUP
...WAS THIS.
I CAME JUST AS I WAS. THE ONLY THING I BROUGHT...
...ARE THE CLOTHES I WORE WHEN I CAME HERE.
THESE...
SHFF

A SORCERER MUST REMAIN HIDDEN.
NOT EVEN YOU.
NOT EVEN...
...MY FAMILY.
ALL YOUR TROUBLES WILL GO AWAY.
BECAUSE OF THIS SEAL...
...I COULDN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING FROM MY PAST.
...TO BE BOUND BY YOU ANY LONGER.
BUT I REFUSE...
HIS FAMILY...

YOU WANTED TO FORGET, DIDN'T YOU?
...WOULD HAVE DISAPPEARED.
ALL YOUR GRIEF AND SORROW...
WHY?
EVEN SO...
...PAIN.
...RUN FROM...
I MUSTN'T
RRIP
I MUST BE TRULY STRONG...
...IN ORDER TO PROTECT YOU.
PHo

THIS IS
THE POWER
I CHOSE.

CAPTURE HIM!
TO YEARN...
SO BEAUTIFUL...
SO THIS IS...
...THE NUE.
...AND BE YEARNED FOR...
A NOBLE AYAKASHI WHO BELONGS TO NO ONE.

...
HA!
WHA
SOF
YOU CANNOT REACH ME.

KARE
KUSH
GOOD-
BYE.

BAN
HYO
O
O
O

DASH
HIMARI...
...
IS IT OVER?
POFF
POFF
...
ARE YOU SAD?
I CAN'T TELL.
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?
TMP

I REFUSE TO CRY.
IF AOI ISN'T CRYING, NEITHER WILL I.
I'M NOT ANGRY.
YOU HAVE A STRANGE LOOK ON YOUR FACE. ARE YOU ANGRY?
SHFF
THEN...
...YOU'RE NOT MAD ABOUT THE KISS?

HMM...
YOU DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE.
THAT WAS A SPUR-OF-THE-MOMENT THING...
...TO SNAP ME OUT OF THAT SPELL, RIGHT?
BLU
SH
TH-THAT WAS...
WHAT IF I WERE TO TELL YOU...
...I SIMPLY WANTED TO?
NO FAIR SAYING THAT AS THE NUE!
DASH

NOT MY MEMORIES AS A HUMAN BEING...
NOR MY PAIN.
...ANYTHING FROM ME.
MOMOCHI HOUSE DIDN'T TAKE...
...
...AS I EXPECTED.
BUT YOU SAW THROUGH ME...
I WANTED THEM TO BE TAKEN AWAY.
EVEN SO...
HYOOO
...SLOWLY...

...AND ARE YEARNED FOR...
BUT YOU'RE STILL ONLY HUMAN.
...
WHERE AM I?
WHAT...
...WAS I DOING?
YOU YEARN...

YOU CALLED HIM YOUR MIRROR IMAGE—
BUT NOT EVERY HUMAN CAN BECOME AN AYAKASHI
THOSE WHO STRAY FROM THE PATH OF HUMANS
AND CANNOT BECOME AYAKASHI
...ARE KNOWN AS OGRES.

CROWS!
ARE YOU THERE?!
OGRES ARE STILL HUMAN.
WHY...?
ONLY HUMANS CAN BECOME OGRES.
MY SPIRITUAL POWERS...
HOW FITTING FOR A HERETIC LIKE YOU.
NOW GO ROAM.
ROAM IN AN ENDLESS WORLD OF SUFFERING.

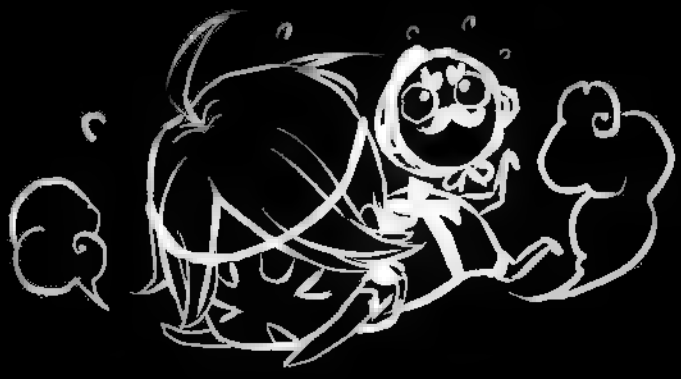
YOU SHOULD TRANSFORM BACK...
...AND REST.
MASTER NUE.

IT'S OKAY, AOI.
I'LL LOOK AWAY.
...
NO.
WHY...
AOI...?
...DID I REMEMBER THOSE WORDS?
YOU MUSTN'T...

YOU MUSTN'T LOOK AT ME.
IT SEEMS...
...I CAN NO LONGER TRANSFORM BACK.

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE



This is Volume 7. Aoi's story now begins to unfold. There is an old saying that children belong to God until they are seven years old. Up until this point, his story has been veiled in ambiguity.

Even some phrases in daily life have sinister nuances. For example, *ojamashimasu* ("thank you for having me") contains some frightening kanji. (*Ja* means "evil" and *ma* means "demon.") If you trace the roots of nursery songs, children's games and seasonal customs, you will often find they are related to demons and evil...

These uniquely Japanese customs are born of our desire to come to terms with such things. I like them.

The undefined categorization of "ayakashi" is the same. Something that exists where there is nothing.

That's what I'd like to portray.

Well, well! *The Demon Prince of Momochi House* is going to become a stage play! When I first heard the news, I couldn't believe it. It was unimaginable to me, and I was filled with excitement and curiosity. The color spread at the beginning of this volume was a manifestation of the joy I felt at that time. :)
Since then, the cast was announced, the script was written, the music was created (J-rock!) and rehearsals began. A 2.5 dimensional world of *Momochi House* is emerging and it is so exciting! I'm so happy that I'll be able to see this brilliant play with all you Momochi fans. Thank you to all who were involved in this endeavor and for your continued support!

Aya Shouoto
Summer 2015

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

<STAFF>
NORIE.O / AYA.M / MAIKO.T
KAZUKO.M / KANAE.S / NAOKO.K

The DEMON PRINCE of MOMOCHI HOUSE

Momochi House Illustration Gallery

Asuka Magazine Cover, December 2014

Asuka Magazine Cover, April 2015

Original Jacket Illustrations for Drama CDs 1–3

Original Merchandise Illustrations (Incense)

Asuka Magazine Supplement Illustration Collection, January 2015

Asuka Magazine Preview Illustration, March 2013

Momochi House is being adapted for the stage! In celebration, I drew Nue on the cover striking a pose as if he were a theatrical actor. Drawing Nue is always a challenge because his ears, which are essential, are hard to see depending on the design. And you only ever catch a glimpse of his tail...

-Aya Shouoto

Aya Shouoto was born on December 25. Her hobbies are traveling, staying at hotels, sewing and daydreaming. She currently lives in Tokyo and enjoys listening to J-pop anime theme songs while she works.

The Demon Prince of Momochi House

Volume 7
Shojo Beat Edition

Story and Art by Aya Shouoto

Translation JN Productions
Touch-Up Art & Lettering Inori Fukuda Trant
Design Fawn Lau
Editor Nancy Thistlethwaite

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